

**REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCE**

**1. PURPOSE**

This Directive provides APHIS policy, delegation of authority, and procedures for using representation allowances by Foreign Service (FS) officers having representational responsibilities.

**2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

This Directive replaces APHIS Directive 417.10, dated 9/1/87.

**3. AUTHORITY**

The legal and regulatory authority is Section 905 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended (22 U.S.C. 4085). Representation allowance provides for the proper representation of the United States, thus furthering foreign policy objectives. This is the only reason for the availability of such funds and the only criterion for their use. Chapter 300 of the Standardized Regulations (3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 3240) specifies allowable items of expenditure, prohibitions, and payment for representation purposes.

**4. POLICY**

- a. Representation allowances are intended to cover allowable items of expenditure by Foreign Service employees whose official positions entail responsibility for establishing and maintaining relationships of value to the United States.
- b. Selected APHIS representatives are authorized to expend APHIS funds for allowable items used to further the interests of the United States.
- c. The wealth of the U.S. as a nation should not be flaunted and requires a certain restraint, coupled with the standards of local customs. The ability to make effective but conservative use of limited resources is an art that usually must be learned. Thus, it is incumbent upon senior officers, including the chief of mission, to give guidance to those less experienced in the proper use of representation funds. A great deal of work that could be called "representation" involves little or no expenditure of money. Further, lavish expenditures are questionable in most circumstances.

- d. APHIS will continue to review representational activities to ensure effective use of available funds. To the maximum extent practicable, officers will purchase American products, including wine, for authorized gift-giving occasions by Senior FS officers. Officers also should stay within the dollar limits for the various types of approved representation activities at their overseas posts.
- e. Expenditures for tickets or admission to unhosted events normally are a poor use of representation funds, and while not prohibited, are considered allowable only in those instances where the highest levels of host country officials are present and the attending employee has the necessity and opportunity to fulfill the purpose of the representation allowance.
- f. No more than 50 percent of the guests invited to representational functions should be United States Government executive branch employees. Foreign Service National (FSN) and bilateral commission employees count toward the American presence.
- g. United States Government employees on temporary duty who attend representational meals will not be included in representational expense claims. Instead, they will pay for their meal out of their Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) funds on their travel vouchers.
- h. While expenditures for tangible gifts normally do not fulfill the purpose of representation allowance, it is occasionally necessary for Senior Foreign Service officers to extend courtesies by giving gifts to representatives of foreign countries and international organizations.

## **5. ALLOWANCE EXPENSES**

- a. Uses. Expenses for the following types of items in a foreign country or area of assignment may be approved for payment:
  - (1) Entertainment undertaken to promote personal and protocol relationships necessary to perform official duties;
  - (2) Tips and gratuities (in addition to those related to entertainment) to persons not employed by the United States, where such gratuities are customary in a foreign country and are necessary or desirable for the promotion of the United States' national interests;
  - (3) Purchase of flowers, wreaths, or similar tokens for presentation in accordance with local custom on appropriate occasions such as weddings, births, or deaths of important officials;
  - (4) Entertainment of members and employees of the legislative and/or judicial branches of the United States Government, or other American citizens

who are not employees of the Federal Government, including State and local officials and business persons;

- (5) Hiring of extra waiters, busboys, or other temporary help to serve at official functions; and
- (6) Other representational expenses which the head of the Agency may authorize or approve as being of a type to promote the interests of the United States.

b. Prohibitions. Representation allowances will not be used for the following purposes:

- (1) The hire, purchase, operation, or repair of any motor-propelled, passenger-carrying vehicle, including aircraft.
- (2) Membership fees or dues in any society, club, or association.
- (3) Expenses for printing or engraving.

Exception: Expenses for printing or engraving invitations for official functions may be charged to representational funds where such expenses are incurred in conformity with Government Printing and Binding Regulations or where printing or engraving is done abroad pursuant to Agency authority for such printing. Arrangements must be made through the Embassy for the procurement, payment, printing, or engraving services for invitations for official functions. APHIS has no legal authority for direct procurement of invitations.

Some of these items (e.g., printing, business cards, and award banquets) can be procured legally under certain conditions. Please contact the International Services (IS) General Services Office (301-734-7550) for specific information. When an item is not specifically mentioned in this Directive, err on the side of caution. Confer with supervisors or headquarters before making purchases that may lead to questions. Be aware that items not accepted for representation will be covered out of the officer's personal funds.

- (4) Internal office parties.
- (5) Going-away parties for Foreign Service officers (unless they are necessary to build bilateral relationships, the incoming officer is present, and there is at least 50 percent non-American presence).
- (6) Employee award banquets.
- (7) Gifts for FSN employees.

- (8) Printing of personal business cards.
- (9) Printing of Christmas cards or other types of greeting cards.
- (10) Compensation for cost of living and quarters expenses, or for assignment under difficult environmental conditions; including expenses of recreation and entertainment solely for employees of the executive branch of the United States Government and their families.

## 6. FUNDING AND PAYMENT

- a. Representation allowance is not an allocation of funds; it is simply an authorization to use funds from APHIS program allocations to finance representation activities. Each position granted this authorization has a maximum yearly amount which may be used for this purpose. This limit is established by the Administrator, is dependent upon need, and is communicated directly to each IS Regional Director or domestically-based Foreign Service officer. Each Regional Director will, in turn, sub-allocate the regional allocation within his/her region. Regional Directors may request additional funds from the APHIS Administrator, through the IS Deputy Administrator.
- b. **Vouchers.** Representation allowance claims are not to be processed through embassies or imprest/petty cash funds. Claims may be reimbursed to an employee or be paid directly to a vendor upon presentation of appropriate vouchers for allowable expenditures. To receive reimbursement for expenses, officers must submit Form SF-1069, Voucher for Allowances at Foreign Post of Duty, to the Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS) Claims Team, Minneapolis, MN (phone: 612-336-3270 or 612-336-3269; fax: 612-370-2083). The following information should be included with the SF-1069:
  - (1) Entertainment vouchers must show:
    - (a) Type, purpose, and location of function;
    - (b) Names and titles of American and foreign guests of honor; and
    - (c) A brief description of the official business conducted.
  - (2) Representation Other Than Entertainment. Vouchers must show:
    - (a) Occasion;
    - (b) Name and title of recipient(s); and
    - (c) Reason for expense.

- c. **Receipts.** Expenditures must be supported by receipt, copy of canceled check, credit card charges, admission ticket stub, or other similar physical means. For each expenditure of less than \$75, the employee's certification will be sufficient when it is impracticable to obtain a receipt.

The MRPBS Claims Team will review the voucher and determine that no prohibited item is included. When necessary, they will consult with the IS Deputy Administrator's office. Upon approval, the SF-1069 will be forwarded to the Claims Team, MRP Minneapolis Business Site, for payment.

The MRPBS Claims Team will maintain copies of all invoices for employees to whom representation allowance authority has been extended. Each IS regional office is responsible for monitoring regional representational expenses and allocations and reporting them in their monthly status of funds reports.

## 7. INQUIRIES

- a. Direct inquiries through administrative channels to the IS Administrative Services Director of Personnel and Travel.

Director of Personnel and Travel  
USDA/APHIS/IS, Unit 65  
4700 River Road  
Riverdale, MD 20737  
USA

- b. This Directive is available on the internet at [www.aphis.usda.gov/library](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library).

/s/

William J. Hudnall  
Deputy Administrator  
MRP Business Services